

President Kuchma and Prime Minister Yushchenko's reform agendas.

I would like to submit for the record and bring to the attention of my colleagues an interview with Grigoriy Surkis, a prominent, businessman and member of the Rada.

IT'S TIME FOR TRANSPARENCY

(By Grigoriy Surkis)

It would be desirable if our Parliament did not have deep divisions between the majority and minority factions; however this is not possible due to deep-rooted ideological divisions in the country.

Former Speaker Tkachenko, leader of the Communists in the Rada, demonstrated his inability to work out a compromise even when the majority announced a willingness to work cooperatively with Communist leaders on a legislative program.

By the way, leaders of the Ukraine Communists should learn a lesson from their Russian counterparts, who recently made a deal with the pro-government factions in organizing the Duma and distributing assignments among party leaders. They have a difficult time understanding that Communist authoritarianism does not exist in post-Soviet societies, nor is it as strong after eight years of democracy.

However, it remains to be seen how the pro-government bloc in Russia will get the Communist Speaker of the Duma to act on progressive legislation and actually achieve results. I sincerely wish that this arrangement will work so that the people of Russia benefit from progressive changes that will improve living standards that make for a better society.

In my opinion, Ukraine has chosen the right path. In parliament, we formed a majority bloc by uniting the "healthy" forces who were committed to reform legislation. This is necessary to ensure speedy action on a range of progressive proposals to deal with the problems of our pension system, taxes, and the criminal and civil code. This will help us to clean house in the Rada and institute badly needed changes that, in the past, impeded our efforts to confront these needs.

Is compromise possible? Let's think about it. We want our people to live in a new environment but there are some who want to pull us back to the old Soviet system. To go back is to lose hope and confidence in our ability to improve our situation. The reformers want a government that will enable people to own property while the Communists want people to be the property of the state. We believe that the Constitution is the basic law, but they still believe the "Party" is the supreme authority.

Finally, in a democracy it is acceptable to have a compromise, which is how people work out their differences. But the old guard distrusts working with what they see as the "bourgeois" and reject efforts to resolve differences amicably. So we are not talking about compromise in terms of confronting the issues and resolving differences, but the Communists see any negotiations with reformers as selling out or imposing a kompromat on us. I am reminded of the words of the great Golda Meir, who was born in Kiev, who once said: "We want to live. Our neighbors want to see us dead. I am afraid that this does not leave any space for compromise".

The problem would not be so serious if we were talking only about Parliament. However, we are talking about society as a whole. The Leftists seem committed to destroying the Rada, the one institution that ensures representation of the people in gov-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ernment decision-making. Perhaps they do not know about Abraham Lincoln's statement that a house divided cannot succeed and that their intransigence will prevent democracy from taking root in Ukraine. Everyone knows what happens to the person if his right leg makes two steps forward and the left remains rooted in the same spot.

I want to stress again that after the 1999 presidential election, it became obvious that a divided parliament with a Communist as Speaker would prove unacceptable and only serve to obstruct the reform agenda of the government. Had the Communists prevailed, they would have taken the country down the back road of political fatalism. Yet there are some who worry that the unfairness of winners hides the guilt of losers. I can only say that if the Leftists had won the election, we would not be asking these questions.

I am afraid that if the majority had allowed a Communist to remain as Speaker, it would have proved to be a temporary solution, similar to what will happen with the Duma. In the United States, it is possible for the Republicans to control the Congress and the other party to have the Presidency. This is possible because America has 200 years of experience working within a democratic system.

Our country does not have time to wait. For us, every day without enacting and implementing laws is a huge setback for a country that must accomplish so much in a critically short time. The majority knows that it is impossible to form a parliament without the opposition, and it is our intention to treat proposals from the opposition seriously. We have assumed political responsibility that gives us an opportunity to cooperate with the newly re-elected president who bears the main responsibility for society as a whole.

We recognize that it is the president who must provide the leadership and direct the institutions of government. Throughout the years of Ukraine's independence, there is not a single case when the three branches of power simultaneously worked together on behalf of Ukrainian citizens. Today we must take responsibility and are ready to be accountable for our actions.

Once again, we do not have time. The majority of Ukrainian citizens spoke very clearly in the recent election by giving President Kuchma a new four-year term. By this vote, they rejected the Communist Party and the idea of turning back to the old system where freedom and human rights did not exist.

The Communists, of course, feel threatened by the new democratic forces and their reform agenda. They do not want to relinquish power and recognize that a new generation of intelligent and resourceful leaders is taking charge. That is the promise of democracy and, if given a chance to succeed, the future of Ukraine in the new millennium.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 5, 2000

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, due to necessary medical treatment, I was not present for the following votes. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

April 3, 2000:

Rollcall vote 96, on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1089, the Mutual

Fund Tax Awareness Act, I would have voted "yea."

Rollcall vote 97, on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3591, providing the gold medal to former President Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy Reagan, I would have voted "yea."

April 4, 2000:

Rollcall vote 98, on agreeing to the LaHood amendment to H.R. 2418, I would have voted "nay."

Rollcall vote 99, on agreeing to the DeGette amendment to H.R. 2418, I would have voted "yea."

Rollcall vote 100, on agreeing to the Luther amendment to H.R. 2418, I would have voted "nay."

Rollcall vote 101, on passage of H.R. 2418, the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network Amendments, I would have voted "yea."

THE TWO-HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF EASTON, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 5, 2000

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate the beginning of a New Millennium, we are reminded of the history and accomplishments of our forebears in past centuries who "brought forth" as President Lincoln said, "on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." This year, 2000, also marks the Two-hundred and Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Founding of Easton, Massachusetts, which shares a unique role in the Colonial and Civil War history of this great country. I acknowledge the monumental spirit of the citizens of Easton, and to recognize their many contributions to the growth and development of the United States, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

THE CONFEDERATE FLAG

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2000

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, there are a million reasons why the Confederate Flag should not be flying over any state capitol, comprise a part of any state flag, or be displayed in any place of honor or distinction. From its racist past to its polemic present, the one thing that can be stated unequivocally, is that today, the flag has become shrouded in an over-simplified, revisionist version of American history."

"Claims that the flag represents a benign segment of Southern history, ruled by some sort of gentle charm and virtuous code of conduct, are patently offensive to every American whose ancestors were brutalized by the stinging pains of slavery or ostracized by its illegitimate progeny, Jim Crow."

"This legislation is intended to set the record straight. The Leaders of the Confederate States of America were traitors. Had they been allowed to succeed in their ultimate act of betrayal, they would have destroyed all of the principles and freedoms we hold dear as Americans. It is impossible to celebrate the Confederate Flag and simultaneously profess one's love of democracy. It is self-delusional to attribute equality, freedom and opportunity to the Confederacy when its treasonous acts would have destroyed all of these values—these American values."

"As our nation tries to deal with rise in conspicuous acts of racial violence and hate, the one glaring fact with which we are frequently confronted is that we have not adequately and honestly dealt with our past. Once again, this resolution will be a constructive first step in starting that dialogue. I challenge one person who presently supports the flying of the Confederate flag to read the words contained in this legislation and say that the beliefs of the Confederacy, articulated in this bill, do not stand direct conflict with the principles we enjoy as one nation united and indivisible under God."

"At the end of the day, this bill is about the true history of the flag flying over the Capitol building in South Carolina. It clarifies the symbolism connected with the battle flag contained in the Mississippi and Georgia state flags. At the end of the day, this legislation begs the question, 'Will we, as Americans, united and God-fearing, allow ourselves to posthumously give the Confederacy the divided nation they so desperately fought to create, or will we embrace the fundamental principles which presently govern the moral conscience of our nation and work toward a day when the actions of our shared, American heroes overshadow the treasonous acts of a group of traitors whose actions would have destroyed our nation.'"

RECOGNIZING 25 SAN MATEO
COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
FOR OVERCOMING OBSTACLES
AND SERVING AS ROLE MODELS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, this morning at a breakfast in Redwood Shores, California, the Family Service Agency of San Mateo County honored 25 high school students at a "Winners Breakfast," an annual recognition of high school seniors who have overcome great odds and are role models for their peers. Some six hundred people joined in celebrating the achievements of these outstanding students.

The Family Service Agency of San Mateo County is a private, non-profit social service organization which has established and supported programs throughout the County for children, seniors and families, and the Agency started the Winners Breakfast five years ago together with local businesses, the San Mateo County Office of Education and community leaders.

Mr. Speaker, this year the Family Service Agency is recognizing students who have

faced a wide range of challenges, from homelessness, poverty and family and gang violence to chronic illness, personal tragedy, substance abuse and single parenthood. The students were chosen by personnel at the schools which they attend, and each honored student received a scholarship of \$500 paid for by sponsors of the program.

Heather Angney of the San Mateo County Times has written a series of excellent articles which appear in today's issue of the newspaper paying tribute to those students being honored today, and the Times is one of the supporters of the effort to provide funds for these students.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues in the Congress to join me in paying tribute to these outstanding students who were honored today for their perseverance in overcoming the tremendous difficulties they faced. These students are as follows:

Alexandra Chiles of Atherton was diagnosed with cancer at age 12 and endured endless rounds of chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Many years, she was too sick to enjoy Christmas. When she was able to go to school, she often went with thin hair and her face swollen by drugs. Through all this, Alex achieved more than most students, qualifying for the National Honor Society, gentling a nervous horse and volunteering in soup kitchens. In Alex's case, the recognition is bitter-sweet. She died March 22. Her parents, Anita and Robert Chiles of Atherton, will attend the breakfast and join in recognizing other students who are succeeding in spite of great challenges. As Alexandra's mother said, "She was a wonderful model of how we should all confront our problems in life."

Maria Ruth Alvarado of Woodside High School prevailed over abuse, homelessness and poverty to become an activist at school and in her East Palo Alto neighborhood, tutoring at community centers and starting a support group for gay and HIV-positive people.

Albert Balbutin of Oceana High School faced his father's death, his mother's depression and financial hardship and decided to turn his life in a positive direction. He raised his grades from Ds and Fs to As and Bs, became co-president of his class and started Unity 2000, a campus organization dedicated to stopping teen violence.

Sarah Carr of Pescadero High School was considered a discipline problem with a bad attitude who wouldn't graduate. But she turned herself around with the encouragement of school staff and has improved her grades, stopped using bad language and started smiling. She plans to attend college next year.

Karen Cerri of Westmoor High School was abused by her biological and foster families until she was adopted into a loving home at age 10. She now coaches a swim team and serves as a peer counselor, and she hopes to become a paramedic or firefighter and adopt a foster child.

Rosalyn Curincita of Redwood High School and Sequoia High School was distracted from her school work while caring for relatives and marrying at an early age. She entered Redwood and made up two-and-a-half years of work in just one year. Although she works to support her family, she maintains excellent grades, enabling her to return to Sequoia to finish her senior year.

Jared Frias of Carlmont High School was in an automobile accident in which he lost a leg and two people died, including a friend who was like a brother to him. While in the hospital, Jared organized a Holiday Toy Drive for children in the hospital. And last fall, with the aid of a prosthetic limb, he returned to his favorite sport — football.

Renee Frost of Aragon High School has worked hard despite lifelong family disruptions and financial disadvantages. She attends the Regional Occupational Program, where she is described as "best in her class" in a Travel and Hospitality Careers course. As the school's receptionist, she greets the public, organizes the career center bulletin board and helps students enroll in classes.

Robert Gomez of Mills High School has been in a wheelchair since childhood because of cerebral palsy. With divorced parents, he has relied on himself to achieve his academic goals. Despite physical limitations, Robert participates in school activities, attends ball games and supports other students. He hopes to attend college and become a lawyer.

Diana Gonzalez of Community School North lived the life of a gang member from age 11 to 16. She attributes her transformation to the help of God, her best friend and her boyfriend. She graduated from the Gateway Center program with straight A's and enrolled in Community School North. She is on schedule to graduate with a GED by June and will attend Bryman College in San Francisco.

Robert "Tito" Gonzalez of Terra Nova High School is deaf in one ear, which affects his school performance. He was placed in special education in fourth-grade but worked so hard he switched to mainstream classes by sixth-grade. Robert has a 3.2 gpa, was voted "best artist" by his senior class and is considering a career in microbiology and genetics.

Emily Jaime gives credit for her achievement to a fourth grade tutor who encouraged her to read, and that moves her to volunteer at an elementary school twice a week, and now 12 years after failing first grade, she's heading to Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Emily's father left the family when she was four, and she hasn't seen him much since, but her mother and grandmother encouraged her to make the most of opportunities, gap and told her to get a college diploma, something neither of them was able to do.

Lauren Kass of Pilarcitos High School had struggled in school starting in junior high. But after transferring to the Cabrillo district's independent study program, she thrived academically and personally. She received her diploma in February and now works at a preschool and rides and trains horses. She hopes to eventually open her own preschool.

Linda Khiev of Sequoia High School has held her family together since her mother's illness last year, working part-time and handling household duties. Despite the stress, she remains at the top one percent of her class academically. Linda hopes to become a physician.

Victor Lopez of Aragon High School has been largely independent since his mother returned to Mexico to care for his grandmother when Victor was 14. Victor has been a Peer Helper for three years and is a member of student government. He doesn't let negative peer